

Humphry Marshall House  
North side of State Route 162 (Strasburg Road),  
Just west of intersection with Northbrook Road  
Marshallton (West Bradford Township)  
Chester County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-203

HABS  
PA,  
15-MARSH,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

## HUMPHRY MARSHALL HOUSE

HABS PA,15-MARSH,1-

Street Address  
or Location:

On State Route #162 just west of County Road  
#150782, Marshallton Village, West Bradford  
Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania  
(Reference: Map of Chester County /By County  
Commissioners/ 1956)

Present Owner:

Campbell Weir, West Chester R. D. #4, Pa.

Brief Statement  
of Significance:

This early house dates from 1773, retains much of  
the original design, and was the home of a promi-  
nent citizen, Humphry Marshall, and his heirs.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Humphry Marshall, who built the house, died 1801. The house was left to his nephew, Abses Marshall, who died 1813, leaving the place to two sons, Humphry eventually acquiring all. He died 1880, and the house was sold to William G. Embree in 1881, who sold it to Robert W. Lilley in 1884. His son, Walter, followed. The house was sold in 1932 to J. E. Newlin, who sold it in 1936 to Frances W. Hathaway, who sold to present owner in 1946.
2. Date of erection: 1773 - date stone on south wall of house over door
3. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc.: Unknown
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: The inventory taken at the time of Marshall's death in 1801 very carefully lists all household items and the division into rooms is either carefully noted or implied. The rooms today seem to have remained the same, but with different uses. The room in the center of the house with the stairway has two rooms east of it, with corner fireplaces. To the west of this main room was the plant room and the back room downstairs and the kitchen. Bedrooms on the second floor are apparently unchanged except a back stairway has been removed. The most unusual feature in the house is the flue from the first floor main room. The fireplace is in its west wall. The flue leads back and up at an angle of the second floor west room; in this room it runs along the wall in a series of steps to the west outer wall where the chimney is. The long flue within the house thus helps to heat the plant room on the first floor and the "Long Room" over it on the second floor. In the main room on the first floor (with the stairway in it) is and was a niche for a tall case clock. The Long Room on the second floor has a small wall safe built into the north wall. The wood-

work, especially in the two rooms with the corner chimneys in the east end of the first floor, seems to be much earlier than the house itself, but this is a characteristic of this conservative county.

5. Notes on alterations and additions: The small observatory that projected to the south from the Long Room on the second floor was removed late in the nineteenth century. A back stairway has been removed from the west end of the house. The pent eaves are replacements; porches had been added when the original pent eaves had rotted. A modern frame service wing has been added to the northwest by the present owner.

6. Important old views and references:  
Views: William Darlington: Memorials of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall, Philadelphia, Lindsay & Blakiston, 1849. Facing page 31 (second series of numbering) is an engraving by Washington Townsend of the house. This shows the observatory projecting from the second floor.

Water color in the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pa., signed "P.S." It is not dated, but another with the same signature is dated 1873.

The files of the Chester County Historical Society contain many other later photographs. The most interesting is a stereoscopic view showing the south front with the observatory.

References: Sources of information all to be found in the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pa., unless otherwise noted.

Louise Conway Belden: Humphry Marshall American Quaker Botanist. Typed thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, University of Delaware, Newark, Del. A copy is in the Chester County Historical Society.

William Darlington: Memorials of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall, Philadelphia, Lindsay & Blakiston, 1849

Classified printed and manuscript files in the Chester County Historical Society under headings: West Bradford Township.Lands; and Humphry Marshall.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Humphry Marshall (1722-1801) was the son of Abraham Marshall, who came from Gratton, Derbyshire, England, to Chester county in 1697 and in 1707 settled in West Bradford Township and built a stone house, still standing, where Humphry was born. Humphry Marshall was a cousin of John Bartram, whose home is still standing on the Schuylkill. He was a mason, a family trade as it were. With little formal schooling, nevertheless, his interest in botany was early aroused, perhaps by his cousin, John Bartram. He filled many public offices, was prominent in matters of Bradford Friends Meeting; but his claim to fame is chiefly on his Arbustum Americanum: or, the American Grove, which was printed

in 1785 by Joseph Cruikshank in Philadelphia. In 1786 a French edition was issued. Marshall corresponded widely with the leading natural scientists in America and Europe and exchanged data, as well as collecting specimens for collectors. He was a friend of Franklin, Fothergill, John Dickinson and many others. He was a member of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture and the American Philosophical Society. His nephew, Dr. Moses Marshall, shared his uncle's interests and the 1773 house was left to him when Humphry Marshall died without children. Remains of the arboretum are still on the property.

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None known

D. Supplemental Material: Direct quotations from the following -

1. "Daily Local News," West Chester, Pa., November 10, 1880:

"The Old Marshall Mansion.- Those who are familiar with the residence of the late Humphrey Marshall, at Marshallton, West Bradford township, have been struck by the truthful illustration of the house on the sale bills, recently posted, of the property. The wood cut of the house was made from a drawing of Hon. Washington Townsend, which was sketched by Mr. Townsend at the request of the late Dr. William Darlington. The cut was used in Dr. Darlington's 'Memorials of John Bartram and Humphrey Marshall,' published in 1849. The executors of Humphrey Marshall, Messrs. Robert Hoopes and George March, made search for the old cut at the publishing house of Lindley & Blakiston, Philadelphia, where it was found. A copper-plate was taken from the wood cut and used in the sale bills."

2. "Daily Local News," West Chester, Pa., November 11, 1880:

"THE OLD MARSHALL MANSION.- Those who are familiar with the residence of the late Humphrey Marshall at Marshallton, West Bradford township, have been struck by the truthful illustration of the house on the sale bills, recently posted, of the property, which will be sold at public sale on THURSDAY, NOV 18TH inst. The wood cut of the house was made from a drawing of Hon. Washington Townsend, which was sketched by Mr. Townsend at the request of the late Dr. William Darlington. The cut was used in Dr. Darlington's 'Memoirs of John Bartram and Humphrey Marshall,' published in 1849. The Administrators of Humphrey Marshall, Messrs. Robert Hoopes and George March, made search for the old cut at the publishing house of Lindley & Blakiston, Phila., where it was found. A copper-plate was taken from the wood cut and used in the sale bills. This property must be sold the administrators being desirous of closing up the affairs of the estate for the benefit of the heirs. It commends itself to all because of its desirability, and no doubt there will be many bidders.

"Conditions made known at sale, which will commence at 2 o'clock p.m.

"ROBERT F. HOOPES,  
"GEORGE MARCH.

"Jas. E. McFarlan. Auc."

3. "Daily Local News," West Chester, Pa., November 19, 1880:

"Sale of the Humphrey Marshall Property.- Robert F. Hoopes and George March, administrators of the estate of Humphrey Marshall, deceased, sold on Thursday, the following properties belonging to the estate situated in West Bradford township. No. 1, the homestead property containing 30 1-2 acres, which included the Marshall mansion and the noted botanical gardens, was sold to Robert B. Lilley, of Marshallton, for \$3,850. No. 2, a tract of land containing 86 acres and 96 perches, north of the village of Marshallton, to William G. Embree, of that place, for \$76.10 per acre. No. 3, a tract of meadow land, containing 19 acres and 105 perches, was purchased by Abram Marshall for \$88 per acre. James E. McFarlan, auctioneer."

4. "Daily Local News," West Chester, Pa., December 9, 1884:

"Wind-mills.- Robert Lilley, of West Bradford township, is erecting a wind-mill on his property for the purpose of pumping water to supply his house, barn and other buildings. The frame work of the wind-mill will be 60 feet high, so that the sails or fans can be above the surrounding trees. One of the men engaged in putting this one up states that they have fifteen more to erect this season. They are getting to be very numerous through the county; almost within sight of Doe Run there are no less than twelve of these wind-mills. Francis Worth, of East Bradford, has the largest one in this section, the wheel of which is twenty-two feet, while the most of others are only eight and ten feet in diameter. Mr. Worth finds his very useful to him. He not only pumps water with it but he shells corn, saws wood, as well as does many other things about his place. He is now putting in a mill for the purpose of grinding corn and cobs, which will render it still more useful to him."

Prepared by Bart Anderson - July 1953  
Curator, Chester County Historical Society

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This early house (which dates from 1773) retains much of the original design, both on the exterior and the interior, of architectural importance.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Two-and-a-half stories; main block 28' by 51'.
2. Foundations: Stone

3. Wall construction: Masonry walls; stone which is Wissahickon gneiss and diabase and vein quartz.
4. Chimneys: Original
5. Openings
  - a. Doorways and doors: All doorways seem original.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Window openings seem original and agree with old views.
6. Roof
  - a. Shape, covering: Steep pitch - asbestos shingles.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Seem original; but originally the cornice returned on the sides of the house.
  - c. Dormers: None.

C. Technical Description of Interiors

1. Floor Plans: Very wide center hall, the parlor, with two rooms in each of the east and west ends of the house. Inventory shows most of these rooms by name. Except for removal of a rear stairs, little change.
2. Stairways: Main stairway, and had restorations.
3. Flooring: Mostly original.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster - corner fireplaces have panel over mantles.
5. Doorways and doors: Mostly original.
6. Trim: Mostly original.
7. Hardware: Mostly original.
8. Lighting: Modern electricity.
9. Heating: Original fireplaces all remain.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Set well back from route #162 with nothing to detract from it; house faces south.
2. Enclosures: None. Water color of the 1870's shows hedge to the south of the house.

3. Outbuildings: No original ones left.
4. Walks, driveways etc.: None.
5. Landscaping, gardens etc.: Parts of original arboretum remain. Well planted lawns.

Prepared by Bart Anderson - July 1958  
Curator, Chester County Historical Society